

Energy management – staff awareness and motivation

The Sears Group



- Phased energy and environment programme for staff in 2000 retail outlets
- 7.2% reduction in energy consumption achieved in first year
- Cost of awareness programme recovered within a few months
- Impetus gained for other energy management initiatives



INTRODUCTION



Sears plc

Working practices greatly influence the energy efficiency of an organisation. A major, sustained improvement in energy efficiency can only be achieved if people are educated and motivated to consider the energy implications of their day-to-day activities.

This presents a challenge for managers; few people give the need for energy efficiency in the workplace any serious thought, and those who do tend to view it as peripheral to their core responsibilities.

This Case Study explains how the Sears Group addressed these issues by setting up an energy management team, and launching an energy campaign, which resulted in energy savings of up to 20% at some stores.

BACKGROUND

Each retail company within the Sears Group has full responsibility for its own financial performance, and each store manager is responsible for day-to-day operation and profitability.

Historically some of the retail companies undertook energy management initiatives, but many of those failed to achieve their full potential. For example, energy monitoring procedures alerted store managers to unexpected increases in energy consumption, but individual store managers lacked the technical knowledge to investigate and rectify the problem. Similarly, the retail companies were unable to provide assistance and no follow-up action was taken.

Sears therefore decided to establish a full-time central energy team to provide an in-house service to all of the Group's retail companies.

Sears pledged to plant a tree for every sensible suggestion



PLANNING

In April 1994, Sears plc became a signatory to the Department of the Environment's (DOE's) Making a Corporate Commitment (MACC) campaign. In July 1994 a group energy manager was appointed who created a full-time energy team comprising:

- an energy secretary, responsible for the processing of fuel and water data
- an energy analyst, responsible for regular energy monitoring, the production of high consumption reports, and tariff analysis
- an energy engineer, responsible for providing on-site technical support and assistance to individual store managers.

This team looked at the in-house energy needs of the Group's 2000 retail outlets, and marketed its services to each of the retail companies.

The team identified two main issues to address as part of a phased energy management strategy:

- standards must be specified and adopted to ensure that all new and refurbished stores use the most energy efficient plant and services
- store managers needed training so that they could make best use of the controls and equipment provided.

The group energy manager recognised, however, that the impact of these two initiatives would be greatly enhanced if they were delivered as part of a broader energy and environmental campaign – the 'Earth Wise' programme.

The campaign began by increasing staff awareness of energy and environmental issues, thus preparing them for the more focused initiatives to follow.



THE EARTH WISE PROGRAMME

THE EARTH WISE PROGRAMME

The Earth Wise programme stressed the link between energy usage and environmental benefits – viewed as a strong motivating factor, particularly amongst younger employees. The link was reinforced by the logo chosen for the programme. This maximised visual impact, even when subject to monochrome copying.

Earth Wise was designed to be delivered in three phases:

- advance 'flyers' to stimulate staff interest
- an information pack to deliver the main messages of the programme
- follow-up bulletins to provide feedback on the programme's success stories and to maintain staff interest.

The programme was launched in October 1994. A5 size flyers were sent to all stores weekly during the first month, each addressing a different environmental issue. Topics included recycling, conservation of resources and global warming. Each leaflet concluded by asking: 'What can we, as employees of Sears plc, do to help the environment?'

Employees were also advised to

'watch out for further announcements'. This message indicated that the programme was ongoing and not just a single event.

The leaflets were followed by an information pack containing:

- a covering letter from the energy team
- promotional posters
- 'switch off' and other stickers
- a staff suggestion pad.

The Earth Wise logo featured prominently on all material.



A checklist highlights Sears Group's ten-point plan

THE PLEDGE

The staff suggestion scheme was reinforced by a pledge that Sears would plant a tree for every sensible idea. This is achieved by a donation to the Tree Council. It is intended that trees will be planted throughout the United Kingdom, thereby reflecting Sears' national presence. The pledge heightened staff interest in the Earth Wise programme and provided Sears with an ideal opportunity to publicise its environmental commitment to customers.

PARALLEL ACTIVITIES

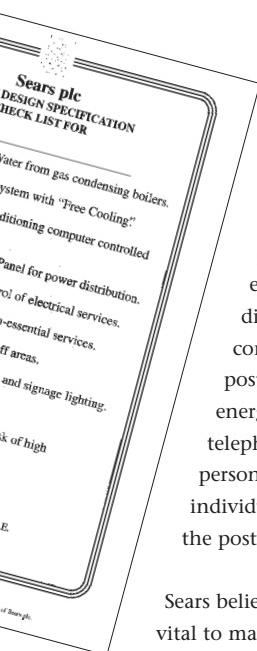
To ensure that the awareness programme was not viewed in isolation, the central energy management team ensured that parallel activities were pursued rigorously throughout the early phases of the Earth Wise programme.

The team followed up poor performing stores identified by its monitoring procedures, and provided a swift response to enquiries from the Earth Wise publicity. This activity encouraged staff and generated a range of success stories for publishing in the later phases of Earth Wise.

As part of the overall strategy, the group energy manager used the interest created by Earth Wise to drive forward a ten point plan for the incorporation of energy efficient technologies into new and refurbished store design. These had to be agreed with all the retail companies in the Group and their commitment obtained to adopt them as part of their design and refurbishment policies.



THE EARTH WISE PROGRAMME



EARTH WISE UPDATE

A few months after the launch of the programme, a large colour poster was sent to each store accompanied by a letter of endorsement from the managing director of the retail company concerned. The centre section of the poster included photographs of the energy team with their functions and telephone numbers. This reinforced the personal links between the team and individual store staff. Other sections of the poster reported on progress to date.

Sears believes that feedback of this nature is vital to maintain staff interest and create a strong sense of ownership, particularly at those stores featured in the poster as success stories.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the Earth Wise campaign was started in 1994, Sears Group's annual energy usage has been reduced by around 7% with savings at some stores being as high as 20%. The resulting financial savings equate to around £600 000.

The annual cost of operating the energy management team is £120 000, a cost that has already been recovered five times over. The energy cost savings resulting from the programme are already equivalent to a £6.8 million increase in group sales.

These savings have been achieved by simple good housekeeping measures that have required little or no investment other than staff training and awareness. Typical is the Adams store in Walsall, where an electric door heater was left on continuously. Staff training in the operation of the heater resulted in a 24% reduction in electrical energy. Similarly, at Miss Selfridge in Meadowhall, an 8% reduction was achieved by training staff to reset timeswitches to prevent display lights operating all night.

The next phase of the programme continues this process by providing focused training to all levels of management.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT MATRIX

The energy management matrix is a simple diagnostic tool which is central to the DOE's Energy Efficiency Best Practice publications on the organisational aspects of energy management. DOE General Information Reports 12 and 13 ('Aspects of energy management' and 'Reviewing energy management') describe in detail how the matrix should be used.

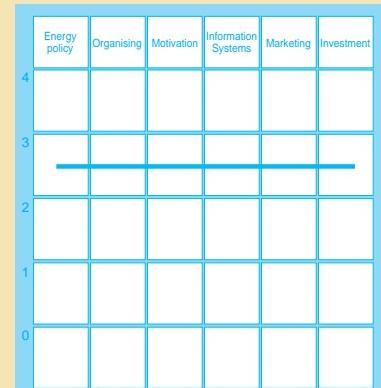
The matrix provides a quick, easy-to-use but effective method for organisations to identify and describe the current priority they attach to different aspects of energy management.

Each vertical column of the matrix deals with one of six key issues, namely energy policy; organising; motivation; information systems; marketing; and investment.

The ascending rows, from 0 to 4, represent increasingly sophisticated handling of these issues. The objective is to achieve a balanced improvement across the columns, and to reach as close to the top as possible.

Examples of a balanced and an unbalanced matrix are shown above right. Also shown, right, is an average profile, calculated from the profiles drawn by over 1500 energy managers in a wide variety of public and private organisations throughout the UK.

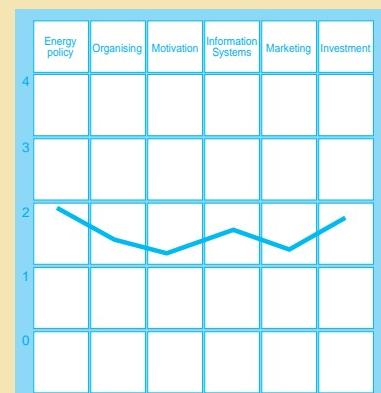
Comparing this with the matrix on page 6 clearly shows that Sears has achieved a high standard in its energy management activities.



Example of a balanced matrix



Example of an unbalanced matrix



Average profile

HOST ORGANISATION



'Earth Wise promotes energy conservation as the answer to environmental issues. Its initial success has been outstanding, with a 7.2% reduction in like-for-like energy consumption and a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of over 15 000 tonnes per annum. The success of the campaign has justified its implementation, continuation and expansion, with further environmental and energy conservation initiatives being used to drive the campaign forward.'

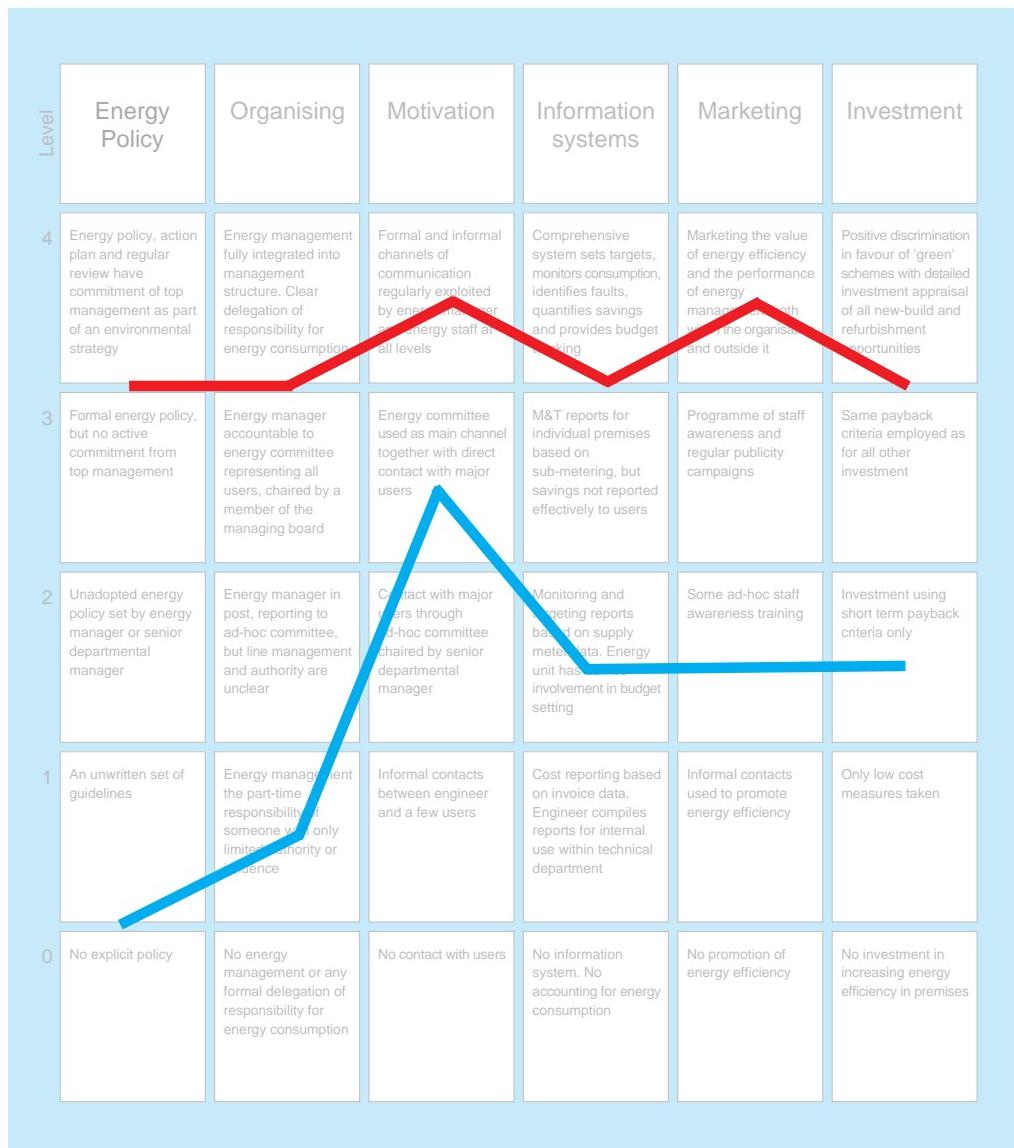
Kevin Thompson, Sears Group Energy Manager

SEARS GROUP PLC

The Sears Group includes Adams, Dolcis, Wallis, Miss Selfridge, Richards, Warehouse, Shoe City, Shoe Express, Selfridge's and Freemans. In 1994/95 the Group spent approximately £15 million on energy, occupied over 2000 premises, and employed over 40 000 staff.

This Case Study describes how the Sears Group implemented a programme to increase staff awareness of energy and environmental issues. The programme not only resulted in environmental benefits but also brought about a culture change within the organisation, and contributed to the Group's bottom line.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT MATRIX



Energy management matrix, showing improvement in Sears Group energy management capability between 1994 and 1995

The Government's Energy Efficiency Best Practice programme provides impartial, authoritative information on energy efficiency techniques and technologies in industry and buildings. This information is disseminated through publications, videos and software, together with seminars, workshops and other events. Publications within the Best Practice programme are shown opposite.

Visit the website at www.energy-efficiency.gov.uk
Call the Environment and Energy Helpline on **0800 585794**

For further specific information on:

Buildings-related projects contact:

Enquiries Bureau

BRECSU

BRE

Garston, Watford WD25 9XX

Tel 01923 664258

Fax 01923 664787

E-mail brecsuenq@bre.co.uk

Industrial projects contact:

Energy Efficiency Enquiries Bureau

ETSU

Harwell, Oxfordshire

OX11 0RA

Tel 01235 436747

Fax 01235 433066

E-mail etsuenq@aeat.co.uk

Energy Consumption Guides: compare energy use in specific processes, operations, plant and building types.

Good Practice: promotes proven energy-efficient techniques through Guides and Case Studies.

New Practice: monitors first commercial applications of new energy efficiency measures.

Future Practice: reports on joint R&D ventures into new energy efficiency measures.

General Information: describes concepts and approaches yet to be fully established as good practice.

Fuel Efficiency Booklets: give detailed information on specific technologies and techniques.

Introduction to Energy Efficiency: helps new energy managers understand the use and costs of heating, lighting, etc.